

Kamla Bhasin



Kamla Bhasin (24 April 1946–25 September 2021) was an icon of India's women's movement. Her spirit, buland awaaz (strong, loud voice), slogans, poetry, songs, writings and speeches resonated with ordinary people as well as academicians, and made her stand out as a leader in the feminist movement.

Kamla co-founded Sangat, a South Asian women's network, in April 1998. She was also a co-founder of Jagori, a women's rights NGO in India. She wrote and published books, booklets, songs and stories, many of which have been reproduced in about 30 languages. An integral part of the global One Billion Rising movement, she was one of the coordinators for the '1000 women for the Nobel Peace Prize' initiative in 2005.

Personal loss and tragedy motivated her to seek a deeper meaning of life in spirituality. She became a follower of Thich Nhat Hahn and Buddhist philosophy, though she remained receptive to all religious teachings.



Kamla Bhasin Award

DRIVING GENDER EQUALITY ACROSS SOUTH ASIA

The award recognises two individuals from South Asia every year with:

- An award to celebrate women in non-traditional livelihoods across South Asia and
- An award to recognise men working towards gender equality

Both award categories include cis and trans men & women.

The award comprises of:

Prize money of INR 100,000 along with a trophy.

It is a great opportunity for the awardees for co-learning and to connect and network with change agents, organisations, donors working across South Asia.

Who Can Apply?

We invite entries from South Asian citizens of Afghanistan, Bangladesh, Bhutan, India, Maldives, Nepal, Pakistan, and Sri Lanka who are residing and working in any country of South Asia.

Applications will be accepted in all official languages of the eight countries.

Award Categories

1. A woman (cis/trans) practitioner of Non-Traditional Livelihood (NTL)
2. A male (cis/trans) who has worked towards enabling a gender-just ecosystem by working with boys/men.

Selection Criterion



Category 1

- Practicing a non-traditional livelihood in her/their context for the last 3 years
- Empowered herself/themselves to gain control over not just her/their earnings, but also her/their life.
- Is a change agent and created opportunities for others.

Non-traditional livelihoods are those which break the glass or rather a concrete ceiling and walls put around the women by virtue of belonging to a certain caste, community, religious group, or because of their sexual orientation, their gender identity, disability, their habitat, and this list can be long, and varied depending upon the discrimination structures that exist in any society. Gender norms around unpaid work and mobility for example have been one of the reasons for women not being allowed to take on occupations such as driving or masonry which requires them to be away from home for a large part of the day and also night. You can read more about non-traditional livelihoods and some examples from around the region by clicking [here](#).

Category 2

- Working with men/boys towards a gender-just world in the last 5 years.
- Countering harmful masculinity in personal and work life by contributing in care work, accepting women's leadership, combating all forms of gender-based violence and gendered socio-cultural norms.
- Is a change agent and influenced other men to enable gender just world.

Engaging boys and men in promoting gender equality is a growing movement. Kamla's slogan, "Men of Quality are not afraid of Equality," highlights the importance of men challenging patriarchal norms. This category aims to recognize such men who have examined patriarchal practices in their lives, acknowledge their privileges, and recognize the constraints of patriarchy. We seek men who actively work with other males to confront harmful practices, oppose violence against women and sexual minorities, share responsibility for domestic care work, and support women and transgender individuals in claiming their rights. Our goal is to cultivate supportive environments for these change agents to learn from each other and inspire others to advocate for gender equality.

Timeline

March 8, 2026- Opening of application process

June 7, 2026- Closing of application process

July-September 2026- Shortlisting and interview of candidates

October 2026- Announcement of the Winners

November 30, 2026- Award Ceremony at TEWA, Lalitpur, Nepal



The Jury

BANGLADESH



Khushi Kabir is a social activist, feminist and environmentalist. She is currently the coordinator of Nijera Kori. She is also involved in an honorary capacity in various national, regional and global forums such as Member, Board Trustees of the Centre for Policy Dialogue; Regional Advisor for Sangat; and Bangladesh Coordinator for the One Billion Rising global campaign.

NEPAL



Binda Pandey is a Nepalese Political activist. She was a member of the 1st Nepalese Constituent Assembly (2008-2012) and is currently a member of the Federal Parliament, representing the Communist Party of Nepal. She was Deputy General Secretary of the General Federation of Nepalese Trade Unions during 2004–09. She represented the Asia Pacific trade union in the ILO Governing Body for a decade (2011-2021). She has written books on “Women Participation in Nepalese Trade Union Movement” and “Women in Nepali Politics”.

INDIA



Anu Aga is a social worker by training. The Thermax Board appointed Anu as the Executive Chairperson. After retiring, she devoted her time to primary education for the economically underprivileged. She has been on the board of Akansha for over 2 decades and helped launch Teach for India (TFI). She retired as Chairperson of TFI and is still on their board. Anu has been active in the Confederation of Indian Industry (CII). She served for 6 years as a member for the Rajya Sabha.



Namita Bhandare is an award-winning journalist with 30 years of reporting experience for various publications including the magazines Sunday, India Today, and the daily Hindustan Times. In 2013, she was appointed India’s first gender editor for Mint newspaper and was there until 2016. She has authored a series of articles on women and work.



PAKISTAN



Munizae Jahangir is the editor in chief of Voicepk.net, Pakistan's first digital media platform focusing on human rights issues. She is an award-winning TV journalist and documentary filmmaker, currently anchoring a prime-time current affairs show called 'Spotlight' on Aaj TV. She is an elected council member of Human Rights Commission of Pakistan; an elected Board member of SAHR (South Asians for Human rights) and the founder of SAWM (South Asian Women in Media). She was honoured as Young Global Leader by WEF in 2008.

SRI LANKA



Radhika Coomaraswamy is a renowned lawyer, diplomat and human rights advocate who served as UN Under Secretary General and as Special Representative of the Secretary General on Children and Armed Conflict from 2006 until her retirement in 2012. From 1994 to 2003, she was the UN Special Rapporteur on Violence against Women. In 2017, she was appointed to the UN Fact Finding Mission on Myanmar and also appointed as a member of The Secretary General's Board of Advisors on Mediation. In June 2022, she was appointed as a Member of the International Commission of Human Rights Experts on Ethiopia.



Organisations behind the Award



Azad Foundation is a feminist organisation working across social and religious divides, enabling resource-poor women to empower themselves by engaging in viable non-traditional livelihood options.

To read more about the work of Azad, please go to -

www.azadfoundation.com



National Foundation for India

National Foundation for India (NFI) is an organization committed to enabling social justice through civic engagement, responsive policy-making and social accountability. Towards promoting social justice, NFI has been working with over 500 grassroots civil society organizations in 14 states over the past three decades. Currently NFI works with Dalit, Adivasi and Minority communities across its program verticals of climate change, gender justice, civic space and promotion of constitutional values.

To read more about the work of National Foundation for India, please go to

<https://www.nfi.org.in/>